

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions and listings of claims in this application.

13. (currently amended) A PWR nuclear fuel assembly comprising:
nuclear fuel rods disposed in a substantially regular array, the array having a peripheral layer of fuel rods constituting a closed loop and an adjacent layer of fuel rods, the adjacent layer constituting a closed loop of fuel rods adjacent to and surrounded by the peripheral layer;

a supporting skeleton having two nozzles;
guide tubes for receiving control rods, said guide tubes interconnecting the nozzles; and

spacer grids for holding the fuel rods, wherein the grids are secured to the guide tubes, the assembly further comprising

at least one lattice reinforcing device for reinforcing the support skeleton, the lattice reinforcing device being disposed between two spacer grids and being secured to the guide tubes,

wherein the lattice reinforcing device does not extend between ~~peripheral~~ the fuel rods of the peripheral layer and between the fuel rods of the adjacent layer.

14. (canceled).

15. (canceled)

16. (previously presented) The assembly according to claim 13, wherein the lattice reinforcing device does not have an arrangement for mixing a cooling fluid that is to flow through the nuclear fuel assembly.

17. (previously presented) The assembly according to claim 13, wherein the lattice reinforcing device does not have an arrangement for holding nuclear fuel rods.

18. (previously presented) The assembly according to claim 13, wherein the lattice reinforcing device comprises two sets of crossed plates that are secured to one another, the plates defining between them cells for receiving guide tubes and cells for receiving nuclear fuel rods.

19. (currently amended) The assembly according to claim 17, wherein the lattice reinforcing device comprises:

two sets of crossed plates that are secured to one another, the plates defining between them cells for receiving guide tubes and cells for receiving nuclear fuel rods, and wherein the cells for receiving nuclear fuel rods are of dimensions greater than dimensions of the fuel rods so as to receive the fuel rods with clearance.

20. (currently amended) A PWR nuclear fuel assembly comprising:

nuclear fuel rods;

a supporting skeleton having two nozzles;

guide tubes for receiving control rods, said guide tubes interconnecting the nozzles; and

spacer grids for holding the fuel rods, wherein the grids are secured to the guide tubes, the assembly further comprising

at least one lattice reinforcing device for reinforcing the support skeleton, the lattice reinforcing device being disposed between two spacer grids and being secured to the guide tubes,

wherein the lattice reinforcing device does not have an arrangement for mixing a cooling fluid that is to flow through the nuclear fuel assembly, and wherein the lattice reinforcing device does not have an arrangement for holding nuclear fuel rods.

21. (currently amended) The assembly according to claim 20, wherein the nuclear fuel rods are disposed in a substantially regular array, the array having a peripheral layer of fuel rods constituting a closed loop, and wherein the lattice reinforcing device does not extend between ~~peripheral~~ the fuel rods of the peripheral layer.

22. (currently amended) The assembly according to claim 21, wherein the array has a layer of fuel rods adjacent to the peripheral layer, the adjacent layer constituting a closed loop of fuel rods adjacent to and surrounded by the peripheral layer, and wherein the lattice reinforcing device does not extend between the fuel rods of the peripheral layer ~~of rods~~ and between the fuel rods of the an adjacent layer of rods.

23. (canceled)

24. (previously presented) The assembly according to claim 20, wherein the lattice reinforcing device comprises two sets of crossed plates that are secured to one another, the plates defining between them cells for receiving guide tubes and cells for receiving nuclear fuel rods.

25. (currently amended) The assembly according to claim 23, wherein the lattice reinforcing device comprises:

two sets of crossed plates that are secured to one another, the plates defining between them cells for receiving guide tubes and cells for receiving nuclear fuel rods, and wherein the cells for receiving nuclear fuel rods are of dimensions greater than dimensions of the fuel rods so as to receive the fuel rods with clearance.

26. (new) A PWR nuclear fuel assembly comprising:
nuclear fuel rods disposed in a substantially regular array, the array having a peripheral layer of fuel rods constituting a closed loop;
a supporting skeleton having two nozzles;
guide tubes for receiving control rods, said guide tubes interconnecting the nozzles; and

spacer grids for holding the fuel rods, wherein the grids are secured to the guide tubes, the assembly further comprising:

at least one lattice reinforcing device for reinforcing the support skeleton, the lattice reinforcing device being disposed between two spacer grids and being secured to the guide tubes,

wherein the lattice reinforcing device does not extend between the fuel rods of the peripheral layer, and wherein the lattice reinforcing device does not have an arrangement for holding nuclear fuel rods.

27. (new) The assembly according to claim 26, wherein the array has a layer of fuel rods adjacent to the peripheral layer, the adjacent layer constituting a closed loop of fuel rods adjacent to and surrounded by the peripheral layer, and wherein the lattice reinforcing device does not extend between the fuel rods of the peripheral layer and between the fuel rods of the adjacent layer.

28. (new) The assembly according to claim 26, wherein the lattice reinforcing device does not have an arrangement for mixing a cooling fluid that is to flow through the nuclear fuel assembly.

29. (new) The assembly according to claim 26, wherein the lattice reinforcing device comprises two sets of crossed plates that are secured to one another, the plates defining between them cells for receiving guide tubes and cells for receiving nuclear fuel rods.

30. (new) The assembly according to claim 26, wherein the lattice reinforcing device comprises:

two sets of crossed plates that are secured to one another, the plates defining between them cells for receiving guide tubes and cells for receiving nuclear fuel rods, and wherein the cells for receiving nuclear fuel rods are of dimensions greater than dimensions of the fuel rods so as to receive the fuel rods with clearance.